



For Immediate Release: August 5, 2016

Animals Seized from Home in Rockville, Operating as Animal Rescue

Animal Services Seeking to Alert Groups Who Are Still Transferring Animals to Them

Rockville, MD – On July 27, 2016, at the 6000 block of Granby Road, officers from the Montgomery County Animal Services Division (ASD) executed a warrant at the home of Merle and Susan Uskievich, founders of Alpha Group Animal Rescue (AGAR). Upon entering the home officers encountered a substantial accumulation of objects that prevented them from moving freely. Pathways were less than one-foot-wide and several rooms were completely inaccessible without climbing through solid waste. Officers found two dogs and 28 cats throughout the home.

All of the animals inside the home were infested with fleas that could be seen crawling on their fur and several animals had obvious hair loss that made the fleas more visible. Fleas were also easily observed crawling throughout the home. Outside, nine chickens were housed in cramped crates that were covered in chicken waste and spoiled feed. The birds themselves were also covered in feces and five were underweight. A 13-week old female kitten was humanely euthanized as a result of starvation from anemia caused by the flea infestation that was further complicated by a severe upper respiratory infection. The Uskievich's have been charged with a total of ten counts of animal cruelty.

The Uskievich case comes less than a month after the sentencing for Katherine Ting Tiong, the Rockville woman charged with keeping 66 dogs in her home in deplorable conditions. Tiong claimed that she was running a dog rescue called Forever Homes Animal Rescue, Inc.

"Rescue organizations play such an important role in placing lost, abandoned and unwanted animals; however, situations like this one, as we saw with Tiong, serve as a "black eye" to those rescues committed to doing what's best for the animals in their care," said Director of the Animal Services Division, Thomas Koenig.



Animal Crates Containing Kittens

The Uskievich's claimed that they had turned over all animals in their care to Animal Services, however, throughout the next few days, Animal Services received calls from AGAR's retail partner (at several locations) regarding sick kittens that had been dropped off by Susan Uskievich *after* the search and seizure warrant that was executed on July 27th.

Investigators are asking animal welfare groups throughout the region who are currently transferring animals to Alpha Group Animal Rescue or the Uskievich's to contact the Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center at 240.773.5900 ext.7.

About the Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC)

MCASAC provides high-standard sheltering and care to the homeless animals in our community and ensures the safety and welfare of the county's citizens. Through adoptions, education, outreach, and more, MCASAC serves as a critical community resource to promote and advocate for responsible pet care. Animal Services Officers are on duty seven days a week to investigate citizen complaints and respond to animal emergencies 24 hours a day. Looking for more information? Visit our [Website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

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Media contact: Katherine Zenzano, Community Outreach Coordinator
Email: katherine.zenzano@montgomerycountymd.gov
Phone: 240.773.5656